

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 247/90 (AFR 60/05/90, 15 June 1990, and follow-up AFR 60/07/90, 15 August 1990) - Death in Detention/Legal Concern

BURKINA FASO: Sixteen students, including:

Jean-Clément BAGRE
Sie Souleymane COULIBALY
Boukary DABO (note complete name)
Seni KONANDA

Boukary Dabo, a medical student at the University of Ouagadougou, has died in detention. Although the exact date of his death is not known, it was reported in early October 1990. Few details are yet available, but it appears that his death was probably due to ill-treatment. This is the second death of a political prisoner in Burkina Faso that Amnesty International has learned about this year.

Boukary Dabo, who was in the seventh year of his studies, was among at least 16 students who remained in detention without charge or trial after being arrested in May 1990 in connection with disturbances at the University of Ouagadougou.

Over 40 students were arrested following student protests and demonstrations; others were suspended from their studies. Some were subsequently released but at least 16, including the four named above, remained in detention. Eight are reported to have been forcibly conscripted into the armed forces and to be held in army barracks in Pô, Dedougou and Koudougou. Although the government has claimed that they are no longer prisoners, Amnesty International considers them still to be prisoners of conscience. The others are held in Ouagadougou, either in the basement of the Direction de la sûreté nationale, the Gendarmerie nationale or the Conseil de l'Entente building.

Amnesty International is still concerned about their incommunicado detention without charge. The death of Boukary Dabo has exacerbated fears about their treatment in custody. Reports of his death come less than three weeks after the death in custody of a teacher from the University of Ouagadougou was unofficially confirmed. Guillaume Sessouma died as a result of torture within a week of his arrest in late December 1989 (see UA 390/90, AFR 60/08/90, 27 September 1990).

None of those detained have been allowed visits from their families or from lawyers since their arrest more than five months ago, and none has been charged with any offence. Under the terms of Burkinabè law, detainees may be held in custody for questioning (garde à vue) by the security forces for a period of 24 hours, renewable for a further 48 hours. After this time they should be referred to the procuracy either to be formally charged with an offence and have their cases investigated by a judicial authority, or otherwise released.

Amnesty International is calling for an immediate and independent investigation into the death of Boukary Dabo and for measures to be taken to ensure that detainees cannot be tortured or ill-treated, in particular by ending the practice of long-term incommunicado detention. It is also calling for the immediate release

of Jean-Clément Bagré, Sie Souleymane Coulibaly, Seni Konanda and other students arrested in connection with events at the university during May 1990 on the grounds that they are prisoners of conscience, detained for having peacefully exercised their rights to freedom of expression and association.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/airmail letters, in FRENCH if possible:

- expressing grave concern about reports that Boukary Dabo has died in custody;
- requesting that an official investigation be set up, which should be headed by an independent and impartial figure, such as a judge, to establish the cause of Boukary Dabo's death, and that its findings be made public;
- urging that, if members of the security forces are found to have been involved in ill-treating Boukary Dabo, they be prosecuted;
- calling on the government to take immediate action to ensure that detainees cannot be tortured, in particular by ending the practice of prolonged incommunicado detention;
- urging the immediate release of all students still held, including those forcibly conscripted into the armed forces and now held in army barracks.

APPEALS TO:

Son Excellence Capitaine Blaise Compaoré
Président du Front Populaire
Chef de l'Etat et Chef du Gouvernement
Présidence du Faso
BP 7031
Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Telegrams: President Compaoré, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso
Telexes: 5221 PREFASO BF

Monsieur le Capitaine Gilbert Diendéré
Secrétaire chargé de la Défense et de la sécurité
Comité exécutif du Front populaire
Secrétariat général du gouvernement
Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Telegrams: Capitaine Diendéré, Front populaire, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso
Telexes: 5555 SEGEGOUV BF

Monsieur André Roch Kaboré
Ministre d'Etat
Secrétariat général du gouvernement
Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Telegrams: Ministre d'Etat Kaboré, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso
Telexes: 5555 SEGEGOUV BF

COPIES TO:

Monsieur Alidou Ouedraogo
Président
Mouvement burkinabè des droits de l'homme et des peuples (MBDHP)

01 BP 2055
Ouagadougou 01, Burkina Faso

Monsieur Pierre Waongo
Rédacteur
Sidwaya
Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Agence burkinabè de presse
BP 2507
Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 28 November 1990.